

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Children, Youth and Families: Direction and Priorities

The Department of Mental health is committed to children, youth and families. This commitment involves responsibility to provide leadership in establishing standards of care for services for children, youth and families; it involves assuring that services provided/purchased are in accordance with DMH values; it involves providing universal prevention, indicated and selected intervention services that support children and youth in their own homes or homelike settings, in school and in their communities and it involves being accountable to children, youth and families of Missouri.

Direction ...

The department is involved in extensive activities regarding children, youth and families. Each of its three divisions provides/purchases services and supports for children, youth and families, as well as participating in interdepartmental work that address a wide variety of issues

While each division will maintain its primary focus in service delivery for children, youth and families, the department is committed to a departmental system. Therefore, activities, policies and service development will be coordinated within the department to better assure easy access and coordinated care for children, youth and families served by the Department and to provide consistency in standard setting and interagency work.

Priorities ...

Four areas are initially targeted for departmental focus:

1. Development of intra-department and inter-department systems of care.
2. Development of policy, research and effective services for children with autism.
3. Development of early childhood policy and services within an interdepartmental system.
4. Development within the DMH Office of Prevention areas of focus for children, youth and families that reflect evidence-based prevention practices.

Critical Issues ...

The DMH is taking a departmental response to several concerns and initiatives:

- Families having to relinquish custody of their children in order to access mental health services;
- Response to Citizen's for Missouri's Children's Report Mental Health Care Counts; Missouri's Fragmented Children's Mental Health System Demands Reform;
- Participation in Caring Communities and F.A.C.T. Board

SYSTEM OF CARE ...

DMH has identified implementing a system of care as one of its top goals. A system of care is a comprehensive array of mental health and other necessary services which are organized in a coordinated way to meet the multiple and changing needs of children, youth and families. A system of care is more than an array of services, it is a philosophy about the way in which children, youth and families receive services. Partnerships at all levels between families, providers, communities, regions and the state are fundamental to an effective system of care. DMH is currently working within the department to assure that families accessing services from DMH experience a system of care across the department's three divisions. Additionally, DMH is working across state departments to develop an interdepartmental system of care. System of care activities are initially focused on children, youth and families who are at greatest risk of out-of-home care and need return to families and communities. A state level interagency policy team has been created to coordinate local system of care development. Six new local system of care sites have been established: St. Louis City which joined the existing St. Louis County team; and the counties of Adair, Butler, Jefferson, Greene and Jackson. Greene County has received a federal grant (see insert) which will focus system of care efforts initially on services for children with co-occurring psychiatric and developmental disorders. Additionally, a System of Care initiative funded through a federal CMHS grant is in its fifth year of implementation in St. Charles County.

Early Childhood... The DMH has prioritized examining the needs of the early childhood population to aid in developing policy and services within an interdepartmental system. At present this includes working with the state School Readiness Indicators Interagency Team which is participating in a 17 state initiative to:

- 1) Create measurable indicators;
 - 2) Implement these indicators at the state and local level; and
 - 3) Stimulate and support a policy agenda
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Missouri Autism Projects... There are currently 5 family-driven family support autism projects across the state that provide a variety of services. In May of 2002, a symposium was held to address the State's need for direction in developing public policy to address more comprehensively and appropriately the needs of children with autism, their families, and the agencies that provide services. Participants urged symposium members to move Missouri forward by focusing on collaborative research efforts and coordinated dissemination of information regarding existing and future services throughout the state. The Missouri Autism Research Agenda will be finalized by June 2003.

SHOW-ME KIDS

DMH has been awarded a six-year federal grant to support system of care development through creation of an integrated interagency community-based system of care for children with severe emotional disturbance and their families in six southwest counties: Greene, Christian, Taney, Stone, Barry and Lawrence. Local project development is managed through partnerships with Burrell Behavioral Health, which took the lead in applying for the grant, and the Clark Center.

Prevention... Prevention and early intervention services are broadly focused on children and youth with the intent of preventing initiation of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and progression from initiation to ongoing use. The school-based initiative, Missouri SPIRIT, is a pilot project that seeks to implement and test an array of preventive interventions with school children, grades K-12. Five districts are involved in the initiative: Knox County, Hickman Mills (Kansas City), Jennings (St. Louis County), New Madrid, and Carthage. The initiative includes an evaluation component to assess implementation and impact. Prevention services design is based on a risk and protective factor framework – i.e., lessening the impact of factors that place a child at greater risk for use and/or other problem behaviors such as violence, and implemented services are required to be programs or strategies of proven effectiveness.